

Inspection report for Children's Home

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Inspector	Lucy Ansell
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About this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and the relevant National Minimum Standards for the service.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding:	this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality
Good:	this aspect of the provision is strong
Satisfactory:	this aspect of the provision is sound
Inadequate:	this aspect of the provision is not good enough

Service information

Brief description of the service

The home is a two storey, detached house in a residential area about half a mile from the train station. The house backs onto parkland leading to the river and the local area has sandy beaches. The town is of historical interest and has all local amenities including a cinema, library, various clubs and activities. The home offers care to three young people, aged from eight years to 17 years on admission, with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Summary

The overall quality rating is good.

This is an overview of what the inspector found during the inspection.

This was an unannounced inspection during which all the key standards were inspected.

A new manager leads an enthusiastic staff team in keeping the young people healthy and safe. Young people's welfare is enhanced by the good relationships with staff and excellent safeguarding measures. Young people are encouraged to follow healthy lifestyles, undertake activities and develop independence skills to support their futures.

The home works closely with a range of outside agencies to meet the young people's needs. The Manager is focused to support staff to improve practice through training and supervision. Effective internal quality assurance processes monitor the care of young people and the home's performance. One recommendation was made regarding the complaints procedure.

Improvements since the last inspection

There were no recommendations or actions made at the last inspection.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

The young people enjoy varied, healthy meals and are positive about the quantity and types of food available. Healthy eating is promoted and food is well presented. The young people are also given opportunities to buy, prepare and cook meals with staff support. Meals are well ordered, social occasions enjoyed by the staff and young people. Food storage is well managed as most of the staff are trained in food hygiene.

Discussions, records and observations confirm that the young people's health needs continue to be very well met. Health records capture all the required information and this, with the young person's care plan, identifies their individual needs in a comprehensive manner. The required medical appointments are arranged and referrals are made to health professionals when it is beneficial for the young people. All the young people have access to several therapists, which is a great benefit for their mental health needs. Accidents and injuries are well recorded and key worker sessions and house meetings provide an opportunity for the staff to discuss health issues with the young people.

Medications and treatment are very well stored, administered and recorded. A small stock of 'homely' medicines are held; separate medication administration records are correctly completed for prescription and non-prescription medications, for each young person. The required consents are in place for emergency treatment and the administration of first aid. Staff are trained in first aid and medication administration.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Young people's privacy is respected in this home. All information regarding young people is kept confidentially and their personal information is handled sensitively.

Young people say they know how to make complaints and representations. They also use house meetings and key working sessions to raise concerns less formally. A pre-printed complaint format records the issue and the action taken. It also has space to record the young person's own view of the outcome. The complaints form is clearly accessible for the young people. However the confidentiality of the previous complaint in the complaints book is not maintained.

Young people are protected by well-managed safeguarding systems. Clear and comprehensive safeguarding guidance is provided for all staff and training is mandatory for all new staff with refresher training compulsory. The home's area manager is a qualified social worker with many years of experience and is one of the company's dedicated child protection co-ordinators. They ensure suitable action is taken when there are any safeguarding concerns. All matters of safeguarding are comprehensively recorded and detailed within the home's records and documents.

Staff take prompt action to deal with any incidents of bullying, and policies and procedures ensure the young people are protected. Excellent staffing levels ensure that the safety of the young people is a priority. Staff know what to do in the event of a young person being absent or missing from the home. Individual risk assessments describe the actions to take and these clearly detail each individual's perceived vulnerability. Written records of such incidents are made, and clearly describe the action taken and the content of the discussion held, upon the young person's return.

Young people enjoy positive and supportive relationships with staff members. Any disciplinary measures are constructive and help reinforce positive behaviour messages to the young people. Training in positive handling techniques for staff is up to date. The staff's approach to behaviour management is a calm, modulated response, using a therapeutic approach and rewarding good behaviour. The log books show that management have signed off incidents and complete comprehensive monthly monitoring of the outcomes, to ensure that they spot trends and any incidents promptly.

Young people live in a physical environment which provides good levels of safety and security. Routine health and safety checks are undertaken and clearly recorded, and the home possesses the required insurance cover. Young people are conversant with the fire evacuation procedure; all installations and equipment checks are up to date.

Robust recruitment practices serve to protect young people. New staff are thoroughly vetted before their employment commences and this includes an enhanced Criminal Records Bureau check. Personnel files are in good general order. Visitors to the home are suitably vetted; they are required to sign in and out of the building and do not have unsupervised access to young people or the home.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Young people receive excellent individual support and staff enable them to access professional therapeutic services when they believe it will benefit them. Key worker sessions provide excellent opportunities for young people to discuss personal concerns with staff as well as focus on areas of life that they struggle with. Sessions are well recorded and actions are identified to support young people in moving forward. Equally young people confirm that they can share their concerns with any member of staff.

Education is promoted as valuable for young people and staff encourage them in their attendance. There are some excellent learning resources within the home and staff also promote any opportunities for learning. For example, a recent 'French night' provided a happy sociable occasion but also an opportunity for young people to learn and speak some French and try food from this country. The young people who are not attending school or who struggle to be in full time education have additional education at home or an alternative learning programme that suits them as individuals. All the young people have the required education paperwork in their care files.

The young people are encouraged to engage in individual as well as group leisure activities to help them develop their skills and self-confidence. Games and pastimes are evident around the home but staff also support young people in pursuing individual hobbies such as guitar playing. Equally trips out visits to the gym and swimming pool, cinema are popular. The young people also earn time out unsupervised as part of their independence plans. The young people are encouraged

to be involved in the local community, with the company's other houses as well as local clubs.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

All young people benefit from a placement plan and 24-hour management plans that outlines the individual care they need. Staff ensure that they are fully aware of each young person's progress by reviewing the plans and discussing any changes with their social worker. The required reviews of care which are held to discuss the young people's needs and development in light of their care and progress, include the young person and the appropriate personnel. Staff and young people confirm that they feel able to contribute their views at review meetings. social workers receive comprehensive monthly progress reports. In addition, the home's internal monitoring includes a review of the care plans and discussion at staff meetings ensures all are aware of any changes in care. Equally, changes are shared with the young people during one-to-one time.

Good arrangements are made to enable the young people to set up as well as maintain constructive contact with their family and friends. Arrangements are detailed in their care plans and the young people are aware of them or any restrictions that may be necessary. Staff also maintain positive communication with family members and friends and, by monitoring contact to ensure there have been no adverse effects, they promote and protect each young person's welfare. Contact is well recorded.

The staff encourage young people to share their views and make decisions about how the home is run. Meal times provide a useful informal opportunity for staff and young people to talk together and house meetings are a beneficial forum for ascertaining their views. Staff also support them to make decisions about their lives through one-to-one time or focused key worker sessions. All meetings are recorded.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

The young people receive care and support that encourages independence and helps prepare them for adulthood. Where appropriate, this is part of their care plan, which promotes semi-independent living within the home, including encouraging them to budget, shop and then with assistance cook for themselves.

The home is very comfortable and homely with nice touches that add to the therapeutic environment. There are two reception rooms on the ground floor used as communal spaces for education purposes or for watching television. The large airy kitchen and dining area are used for meals, where staff and young people can sit together, with access to the separate utility room. There is also the staff office and downstairs lavatory. Upstairs there are three large, single bedrooms for the young

people and these have all been individualised and personalised. There is a staff sleeping-in room and one bathroom for the young people and a shower room for staff. The rear garden is enclosed and laid to lawn and shrub borders, the front garden has off road parking and entrance to the garage.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The home's Statement of Purpose has recently been updated and this, alongside a comprehensive young people's guide, clearly sets out what the home intends to do and lets young people know what they can expect.

The experienced deputy manager is applying for registration with Ofsted as the new manager of the home. She is supported by an experienced deputy manager who deputises for her in her absence. Sufficient staff are employed to meet the needs of the young people and there are training opportunities to enable them to develop their skills. Regular staff meetings and thorough handovers contribute to effective team work, which promotes consistency in the care of young people. The home has the required 80% of staff who are trained in a National Vocational Qualification for the care of children and young people at level 3; two new members of staff are still within their probationary period and are booked to start their training once it ends. Staff have regular supervision and receive therapeutic supervision/training and regard this as a positive opportunity to discuss situations at work and their own professional development. The induction and probation period is thorough and comprehensive with good levels of supervision for the new staff.

Effective internal quality assurance processes monitor the care of young people and the home's performance against its Statement of Purpose; records are reviewed and reports produced. These, with the comprehensive reports produced following the monthly Regulation 33 visits, identify trends and themes as well as guide staff to areas for development.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Staff explore the individual personal, social, health and emotional needs of each young person and provide care to meet them. The home celebrates festivals and there are cultural dishes on the menus. Young people are treated fairly and with dignity. They take part in the community and exert choices within their lives in the homes.

Each young person's file is a permanent record of their history and progress that is stored securely. It can be accessed and read by the young people with staff support.

What must be done to secure future improvement?

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure complaints are addressed without delay and the complainant kept informed of progress without compromising the privacy of the last complainant (NMS 16)